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Christian Community

A Program Service of the Council for Social Action of the
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APPOINT FIELD SECRETARY

The Commission on Christian Social Action of the Evangelical and Reformed Church has announced the election of the Reverend F. Nelsen Schlegel to its staff as the associate secretary. He will have primary responsibility for an enlarged program of field service planned by the Commission.

As such, he will be available to assist pastors, local congregations, and synods in studying their community and parish and in planning an effective program of social education and action.

Mr. Schlegel comes to this position with a rich background of experience on the mission field and in the pastoral ministry. He is a graduate of Ursinus College and of Central and Hartford seminaries. He has taught both in American University in Cairo, and in the American School for Boys, in Baghdad. He has served since 1940 as pastor of First Evangelical and Reformed Church of Washington, which recently relocated in Takoma Park, Maryland. Elected a member of the Commission on Christian Social Action in 1948, he has been its representative on the Legislative Committee of the Council for Social Action and in numerous conferences and committees.

Mr. Schlegel is married and is the father of three daughters. He plans to begin his work in the Cleveland office of the Commission, on or about September 1, 1953.

Is Labor Sunday Obsolete?

By Huber F. Klemme

It is sometimes suggested that there is no longer any point in observing Labor Sunday. Labor, it is held, is no longer the underdog. It does not need to be interpreted so much as to be watched!

Even granting this premise for the moment, it would not follow that Labor Sunday should be abolished. If, as stated, labor has become a power in our society, it is important that its power be exercised responsibly, with a view to the total common good. The extent of this power may be and sometimes is exaggerated. But it would be worse than foolish to suppose it might not be abused. The responsibility of power is an important lesson for any group to learn.

Again, the church continues to have a concern for people—both for the individuals who make up the group called labor, and for the life of the group. Since labor represents one of the largest and most inclusive elements in the community, there is point in keeping alive the idea of Labor Sunday.

On the other hand, there is still need to remind America of the origins, aims, and contributions of organized labor. It is too often forgotten that unions arose in response to felt grievances and injustices, and that "big" labor followed in the wake of "big business," not *vice versa*. We forget that labor organizations have played a part not only in improving the economic security and sense of personal dignity of their members, but have made some contribution to the stability of the community and to the security of the unorganized and the general public as well. They were in the front of the movement for free public schools as well as more recent welfare measures. They provide an indispensable channel for democratic bargaining in a complex industrial situation.

Above all, the church is conscious of the Christian significance of work as part of God's provision for His children. The newly recovered emphasis upon the doctrine of vocation suggests that the Protestant church may broaden, but must not abandon, the recognition of human toil and toilers which Labor Sunday affords.

COMING SEMINARS

The United Nations and World Order Seminar, sponsored jointly by the social action agencies of the Congregational Christian and the Evangelical and Reformed Church, will be held in New York City, October 12 to 14. Those planning to attend should make their reservations at once. Programs may be secured from either office.

The Interdenominational Churchmen's Washington Seminar, in which nearly a dozen denominational and interdenominational agencies cooperate, will be held February 23 to 26, 1954. Since the quotas set allow for only 25 Congregational Christian and 20 Evangelical and Reformed representatives, it is essential that requests for membership be in the hands of your denominational office early. First come, first served.

Labor Sunday Message

The Labor Sunday Message of the Churches, prepared by the National Council of the Churches of Christ, and printed with an attractive cover design, is available from the National Council, 297 Fourth Ave., New York 10, N. Y., at 5 cents per copy, or $2.25 per hundred.

International Relations Letter

June 16, 1953

The State Department under the Eisenhower Administration is carrying on a good custom begun by the Democrats. Representatives of several hundred non-governmental organizations are invited to come to Washington twice each year for two-day "background" conferences on foreign policy. The first such conference under the present administration was held June 4-5. For two days about 250 people from a hundred organizations listened to the officers who now conduct our foreign policy, asked questions and, sometimes, expressed their own viewpoints. The press is not excluded but in order to give the officers a little more freedom in their presentations there is a rule that none of the material is to be ascribed to an individual. Such background conferences are often very valuable. This one was rather disappointing. We saw and heard Messrs. Dulles, Bedell Smith, Stassen, Conant (ambassador to Germany), Mrs. Lord (U. S. representative to the Human Rights Commission of the U.N.), several assistant secretaries of State, and many others. I think the presentations were not as helpful as they might have been for several reasons. Some of the State Department officers are so new at their jobs that they are not yet well enough informed to help those who are seeking something more than what appears in the press. Some did not appear to take the conference seriously, needing perhaps a little stronger conviction as to the importance of public opinion. One or two mentioned the almost incredible number of times they had appeared before Congressional committees, leaving them, as they intimated, little time to think. (Congressional committees have their function but they can overdo it to the point of confusion and inefficiency in our foreign policy.) But I had the impression that the spirit of McCarthyism was always present, making some State Department officers so fearful of saying something indiscreet that they came close to saying nothing.

Having been critical, I want to go on to say that the fact that the State Department holds these conferences and that representatives of a hundred organizations come to Washington to listen and to question, to ask for action or to state objections is an interesting and encouraging aspect of our democracy. Government is big and our problems are complicated but both government and people believe in democratic discussion and decision. Let me add that my impression of the persons we met—and I think the impression was shared by others—was the same as I had under the previous administration. As you look and listen you get the feeling that, regardless of the wisdom of specific policies and viewpoints in the Department of State, its officers are sincere and hard-working people who honestly want to serve the American people through their government. I think the level of ability and devotion in the Department of State is high, and this judgment applies to the immediate past as well as to the present.

Major Policies Unchanged

It is instructive to reflect upon the fact that there have been no major changes in our foreign policy since January 20. Some members of the party in power would like basic changes but President Eisenhower has, in effect, put his stamp of approval on every major item of the foreign policy of the preceding administration. At least four major changes were advocated or promised during the election campaign: repudiation of the Yalta agreements, the policy of letting "Asians fight Asians," "liberation" as over against "containment," and the development of a longer-range foreign policy which would not be so dependent on Russian moves. The Administration declined to go through with a resolution repudiating Yalta because it was afraid of setting a precedent which might encourage other nations to repudiate agreements we support. Of "liberation" of Russian satellite countries we have heard nothing since the election, probably for the reason that any real measures in this direction would mean war. At this writing the U. S. is supporting the Indian plan for an armistice in Korea, which was offered under and supported by the previous Administration. We are also discovering that even so powerful a country as the U. S. cannot plan a long-range foreign policy without regard to non-predictable moves by other powerful nations.

The fact that President Eisenhower is following, generally, the foreign policies of the Truman administration is not cited to prove the wisdom of Mr. Truman and Mr. Acheson. It is mentioned only to suggest that when Americans who know the facts of our world are given the responsibility of making the decisions they are likely to reach substantially the same conclusions, partisan political oratory nothwithstanding. Let me add that, in my opinion, the President has handled the new situation caused by the death of Stalin with great skill. To encourage any new readiness on the part of the Russians to be reasonable, without allowing them to think they can gain their ends by a mere change in tactics—that is the American statesman's problem. Not to turn a cold face toward the proposal from a Big Three conference and yet not to rush prematurely into such a conference —that is the course of wisdom. And the President has at this point held the balance.

Two Books

For the average reader, two of the most useful books on foreign affairs that have appeared for some time are: *Foreign Policy Without Fear* by Vera Micheles Dean and *Russia — What Next?* by Isaak Deutscher. Both are compartively short books. Deutscher, living in England, is one of our top experts on Russia. His thesis is that Stalinism has fulfilled its historical function and that basic changes in Russia's internal and external policies are required by the actual situation in the Soviet Union. He thinks that neither the glorification of one man nor suppression of free discussion, even within the Russian Communist Party, could be any longer sustained. It is a fascinating and well-documented thesis — and Deutscher knows the Soviet Union about as well as any outsider can know it. Mrs. Dean's book is written in her usual clear and eloquent style. There is no space here to review it—only to say that insight, good sense and wide knowledge are evident on every page. Vera Dean keeps her essential idealism and her sense of fact and possibility in a state of creative tension.

Herman F. Reissig.

ECONOMIC LIFE

Speaking of "messes" in Washington, the Christian citizen should bear in mind that there are two kinds of corruption. There is the under-the-table deal which violates both law and conscience; and there is the legal "fix" by which the heritage of the people is given over to exploitive special interests under the forms of law.

Without judging as to the relative extent of the illegal corruption under Truman and under Eisenhower, let us give attention to a few of the current drives—some open, some hidden,—to "corrupt" America's natural resources via the legal route.

The tidelands oil give-away is thus far the outstanding and most widely heralded corruption of 1953. This was anticipated as fulfillment of a campaign pledge. Nevertheless it was a corrupt action and one the nation will live to regret. It illustrates the length of the pendulum's swing. When the Harding administration connived at a much smaller corruption at Teapot Dome, they at least sought to hide their actions. Now we sign away a vital national resource with a flourish!

But tidelands oil is more than an isolated event. It is a pattern. Encouraged by it and by pronouncements of administration leaders, other groups of free (booting) enterprisers are whetting their knives to carve out various and sundry chunks of the nation's resource domain for their own private profiteering.

Western stockmen, long irritated by the reasonable conservation policies of the Bureau of Land Management and the Forest Service, are pushing a bill designed to secure and perpetuate their vested rights in public grazing lands. While not actually transferring title to the land, it would effectively tie the hands of the B.L.M. and F.S. at crucial points where conservation and multiple use in the public interest should take precedence over private greed.

Big growers in California and elsewhere are gunning for the 160-acre limitation in the Federal Reclamation Law. This limitation has stood for 50 years as a protection for family farming and against speculation in federally irrigated lands. Only the alertness of friends of the family farm prevented a bill to scuttle this limitation from slipping through the House with no testimony except from its sponsors. When opponents demanded to be heard, the bill was quietly laid aside. But a few days later a bill exempting one California project from acreage limitation was rushed through committee so fast that even the Department of Interior was not given time to express its views.

Clearly the words and actions of Departments of Agriculture and Interior presage dark days ahead for public hydro-electric power generation as well as R.E.A. Coops. The latter are not government agencies at all, but bona fide farmer cooperatives. They have been aided by federal loans and technical assistance to provide electricity in rural areas where private utilities had persistently refused to go.

Now the private utilities are out, with all the tricks of the trade, to stop further public power generation, to take over all they can get of projects built with federal funds, to drive a wedge of high-cost transmission between government generators and R.E.A. consumers —in short, to emulate the oil-grabbers and go one better.

This may be the administration of no "deals"; but it may also turn out to be the era of the "Great Grab." Christians may differ in detail as to the proper roles of government and private enterprise in the area of resource conservation, development and use. Surely we can agree, under the Christian doctrine of stewardship, that whoever controls a basic natural resource has a moral obligation toward all the people to develop it efficiently, to use it conservatively, and to keep profits within reasonable bounds.

Shirley E. Greene.

Speaking of Books

Christian Faith and Social Action. John A. Hutchinson, ed. Scribners, 1953. $3.50.

These thirteen chapters, written by such leaders as John C. Bennett, Paul L. Lehman, Roger L. Shinn, Paul Tillich, Eduard Heimann, Vernon H. Holloway, Liston Pope and Reinhold Niebuhr, provide new dynamic for the social action tasks of Christian men and women in our time. The writers have been associated with the Fellowship of Socialist Christians, founded in 1930, later known as Frontier Fellowship and recently absorbed in the larger organization of Christian Action. Reinhold Niebuhr has been the mentor of this fellowship and this volume is dedicated to him — "Christian, Theologian, Prophet, Statesman."

Professor John A. Hutchinson, Williams College, introduces the volume with a survey of "Two Decades of Social Christianity." He states that the purpose of the writers is to "explore and express a form of social Christianity independent of both Marxism and pacifism." Roger L. Shinn, Professor of Philosophy and Religion at Heidelberg College, writes about the Kingdom of God as "both a continual divine judgment upon all historical hopes and as a constant power driving men to historical activity in God's service." Charles D. Kean, Rector of Grace Episcopal Church, Kirkwood, Missouri, has an illuminating chapter on "The Contemporary Cultural Crisis" and there are chapters on "The Foundation and Pattern of Christian Behavior," Paul L. Lehman; "The Person in a Technical Society," Paul Tillich; "Faith and Secular Learning," Will Herberg; "Can Social Problems be Solved," Liston Pope; and "Christian Faith and Social Action," Reinhold Niebuhr. John Bennett's chapter on "The Church Between East and West" has already been reprinted as a separate pamphlet by the Church Peace Union. With unusual success this book holds the balance between moral idealism and humility, cultural issues and transcendent faith, social ethics and biblical theology. This is the finest single volume on the basis and perspective for social action published in many years.

Ray Gibbons.

White Collar, by C. Wright Mills, Oxford University Press, 1951, $5.00, is a study of the American middle class. As such it is important not only for the sociologist or for the white collar worker who wants to understand the economic and social situation in which he finds himself. It is exceedingly valuable for the minister who is concerned to know the real experiences and problems of the people to whom he ministers in order that his preaching and pastoral ministry may be relevant and effective. Not only informing but full of human interest. *H.F.K.*

Social Action Issues

The new editor of *Social Action,* Dr. F. Ernest Johnson, and the new Editorial Board under the chairmanship of Dr. A. William Loos, announce the following subjects for the forthcoming issues:

October, "The United Nations and the Disciplines of Peace"—A. William Loos.

November, "This Freedom," a study of the Christian roots of freedom. — F. Ernest Johnson.

December, Christian Participation in Politics.

February, The Ways of Social Action, local, state and national.

March, Welfare and the State.

To begin your subscription with the October issue, send $1.50 with your name and address at once to the Council for Social Action, 289 Fourth Ave., New York 10, N. Y.

Church and Race

The U. S. Supreme Court in December, 1952 heard arguments on five cases in which compulsory segregation in public schools is the main issue. Seventeen "Southern" states, the District of Columbia, Kansas and Missouri, as well as certain parts of Southern Illinois and elsewhere will be affected by any decision setting aside *Plessy V. Ferguson,* 1896, "separate but equal" doctrine. In most larger and many smaller places all over the country extensive segregation in schools brought about by residential racial segregation will not be affected, at least in the near future. The legal sanction will, however, be removed if compulsory segregation in schools is outlawed.

After meditating nearly six months the court, reported to be "hopelessly divided on matters of law and public policy involved," asked for a reargument which was set by the court for October 12. Counsel was asked to discuss five specific aspects of the cases that have mainly to do with (1) the intent of the Congress and the ratifying conventions in passing the 14th Amendment to the U. S. Constitution and (2) the way in which a court decree should be formulated should public school segregation be found unconstitutional. While not yet a decision, the questions seem to this writer to point towards a victory for the brilliant lawyers of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. If and when a decision of this sort does come next winter, it will be a triumph for all who have been working for democratic principles in our society. Much work will have to be done, nevertheless, at local school district levels before gerrymandering of district lines, interference with the sale and rental of residences to non-white persons and other extra-legal interferences are overcome.

Meanwhile it is encouraging to note that certain white Southerners are speaking up for equality and obedience to the law of the land. Thus, Dr. Guy B. Johnson (University of North Carolina), Ralph McGill (editor, Atlanta *Constitution,* staff writer Chester S. Davis, State representative Charles Gowen (Glynn County, Georgia) and State Senator James H. Pou Bailey of North Carolina. These men have counselled a thoughtful, law-abiding approach to the problems that will be posed by any conceivable decision of the court. (To keep in touch with developments in these and related matters, we recommend subscribing to NEW SOUTH, monthly bulletin of the Southern Regional Council, $1.50 a year.)

Galen R. Weaver.

Announcing—New Washington Packet Series

Church groups in twenty states, reporting on last spring's packets on Immigration, Trade, and Public Schools, heartily recommended continuation in 1953-54. "Most excellent as they are—comprehensive material—fair to both sides," writes one correspondent. "We believe it is an excellent presentation of material with interest to all," writes another. "Your packet saved me several days of research at the Congressional Library. Even so I spent two days in studying the bill itself." "Outline and materials very good—group enjoyed the discussion very much. Looking forward to future packets." Some leaders "appreciated the abundance of material that came with the discussion" while others desired more compactness or complained there was too much material for one session. The most recent reply stated in the postscript, "The group expressed great interest in and approval of the packet series. We look forward to next fall's series." So do we, and so do hundreds of church groups which expect to use the packets.

The Christian Citizenship Committee has chosen subjects of current controversial nature for the forthcoming packets:
October 15—*The U. S. Policy in Asia.*
November 15—*Congressional Investigations.*
January 15—*Our Natural Resources.*
March 15—*Tax Policies and Program.*

These packets are planned so that only one is required for a group discussion but additional copies may be secured if desired. Each packet is 50c and all orders must be prepaid. We recommend you use the attached order blank and send in your request, with your check, today. Place your order early. Your discussion of these issues will be lively and informative. It will also help create public opinion on crucial national and international issues.

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_____Our Natural Resources
_____Tax Policies and Program

(Be sure to indicate if you want more than one copy of each packet.)

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CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

Sent free to interested pastors and social action committees. Subscription rate to others, 50 cents per year. Additional copies may be obtained for 3 cents each. Requests from Congregational Christians should be addressed to Council for Social Action, 289 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, New York. Requests by Evangelical and Reformed, and others, as well as news items and communications, should be addressed to the Editor, Huber F. Klemme, Commission on Christian Social Action, 2969 West 25th Street, Cleveland 13, Ohio.